

HB 5326

Honorable Mr Chairman, Committee Members, ladies and gentlemen:

We are not calling a spade a spade. Despite the verbal sleight of hand (section 13B and 15C), at the end of the day someone is dead by their own hand (that's suicide). And no matter how merciful those who enabled it may feel, they have killed someone. In this bill we are downgrading our collective conscience and the medical profession. Please do the right thing.

This is a matter I care about very personally. As a caregiver of a terminally ill (Alzheimer's) spouse since 1999, I am acutely aware of the stresses and temptations that come with a diagnosis like that. Marie wisely chose to accept the path God gave her and has enjoyed what she called "the best years of my life." We should all be as happy as she is! Caring for her is not always easy, but we took a vow, November 4, 1967 to do this for each other. My character is being built and so is the community that assists us.

When you receive the bad news it is easy to plunge into deep depression. The voices in your head that say "just give up," "you can't do this," "an impaired life is not worth living" are not good voices. Hope can return, life can go on, pain can be managed by medical science, and sometimes the winning basket comes at the buzzer. Don't walk off the court early.

The voices that tell family members to abandon their vows and family obligations, that "an inconvenient life is not worth sustaining," "get out of the way so we can go on with life" are wrong, too. It is for times like this that vows are made, and times like these that make the family, the community and the culture.

I appreciate the efforts in this bill to put safeguards around "aid in dying," but the experience of other countries has been that these fences tend to crumble once the principle becomes medically, legally, and socially accepted. What about those who have to have someone else sign for them, the mentally incompetent and the elderly?

The safeguards will be abused, evaded, ignored or repealed. The "right to die" becomes a duty to die. Lives deemed inconvenient lose their rights. The depressed and suicidal are enabled rather than supported. The handicapped and

elderly are particularly vulnerable. Physicians, insurers and caregivers are encouraged to do the wrong things.

Marie and I are acutely aware of how dependent we are on the trustworthiness of the medical profession, insurance companies, and now Obamacare to support our desire to live out our lives naturally until God calls us home.

This bill, and the culture of death it represents, would change all that. How are we to trust doctors, insurance people, and government agencies empowered to act in the place of God – and encouraged by cost saving interests to do so? Can we put our lives in the hands of those empowered to take life as well as preserve it – on the basis of cost effectiveness?

Please do what you can to stop this.